



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/literacy-promotes-food-security-and-improved-livelihoods-liberia>

Literacy Promotes Food Security and Improved Livelihoods in Liberia



Rev. Wellington Morris

A group of training participants celebrates the completion of their training, with Rev. Wellington Morris and facilitators Annie Jaddah and Blessing Gerge (bottom row).

Liberia's prolonged civil war caused a near-total collapse of the country's education sector. Since then, groups have led efforts to teach literacy skills to adults as well as to children to help put the sector back on track. One of these efforts serves women farmers who are motivated to become literate because they see the abilities to read and to write as tools that they can use to improve their businesses and enhance their livelihoods.

In his role as a lead consultant with the U-Foundation, a Liberian nongovernmental organization that delivers training in a number of subject areas—including literacy, agriculture and development—the Rev. Wellington Morris has helped to shape one of the efforts. As part of the Feed the Future Champions for Change Leadership Training, Rev. Morris is helping to train women farmers in literacy, agriculture and business skills.

So far, Rev. Morris has been able to reach out to about 50 women. They are known as “market women”—smallholders who grow food to feed their families but who may also produce a surplus yield that they can sell in markets. These women have specifically requested the training because they are confident that its benefits will include knowledge that will help them sell their produce in the markets within the region of Careysbury, Montserrado.

“We have developed a training to specifically educate our market women on food security, how to manage money, and small businesses,” said Rev. Morris. Because the U-Foundation, a civil society organization, is part of the local community and has its ear to the ground there, he added, it was able to detect something that outsiders might have missed: If people see literacy as a tool they can use to help them in both their farming and business practices, then they are more likely to want to become literate.

The women who show interest in the training gather for 3 hours, outside of the market place. The format of the training

includes a dynamic discussion that uses illustrations and engages the participants, encouraging them to offer their own points of view. The women then break out into small groups to reflect and develop action plans.

The U-Foundation plans to extend this capacity building training, with its emphasis on food security and good business practices as well as on literacy, to 10,000 market women and men. To date, the U-Foundation has developed 40 different training manuals, which target different types of topics and lessons that are relevant to the community. It also has trained 30 instructors.

Drawing on the Champions for Change curriculum, the U-Foundation has trained 40 adult literacy-learning facilitators and delivered customized leadership training to 600 teachers in a total of five of Liberia's counties. One of the teachers, Blessing George Azoukwo from Montserrado County, is now a facilitator and coordinator with U-Foundation. The women who have participated in the literacy training, she said, are now taking the lessons and concepts they learned and are using them to improve their livelihoods. The effort, she stressed, has "impacted a lot of lives."

Rev. Morris hopes that it will impact many more, so that "illiterate adults who are farmers and marketers, especially women, will be able to listen, read and write effectively to help them earn a good income from their farm businesses."